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Highlights of the NAHMS Sheep and Lamb Nonpredator Death Loss in the United States, 2004 Report

The National Animal Health Monitoring System's (NAHMS) Sheep and Lamb Nonpredator Death Loss report provides a breakdown of sheep and lamb death loss in the United States in 2004 for all causes by size group and region, with special emphasis on nonpredator causes of loss. Where possible, 1994 and 1999 death losses were provided for comparison.

Data for the report were gathered via a random sample of U.S. producers surveyed by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Survey procedures ensured that all sheep producers, regardless of operation size, had an opportunity to be included in the survey. Large operations were sampled more heavily than small operations. About 22,000 operators were contacted during the first half of January 2005 by mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews. The following are highlights excerpted from the NAHMS Sheep and Lamb Nonpredator Death Loss in the United States, 2004 report, which was released in November 2006.

Sheep and lamb nonpredator and predator death loss—1994, 1999, and 2004

Since 1994, nonpredator causes accounted for the majority of U.S. sheep and lamb death losses. In 2004, 62.7 percent of losses were due to nonpredator causes (table 1).

Table 1. Number of sheep and lamb death losses by cause and percentage of loss by cause—by year:

Cause	Number and Percent Loss					
	Year		Year		Year	
	1994*		1999		2004	
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.
Nonpredator	577,950	61.1	472,700	63.2	376,100	62.7
Predator	368,050	38.9	275,700	36.8	224,200	37.3
Total	946,000	100.0	748,400	100.0	600,300	100.0

*Total sheep and lamb death losses for 1994 have been revised. See full report for complete discussion: <<http://nahms.aphis.usda.gov/sheep>>

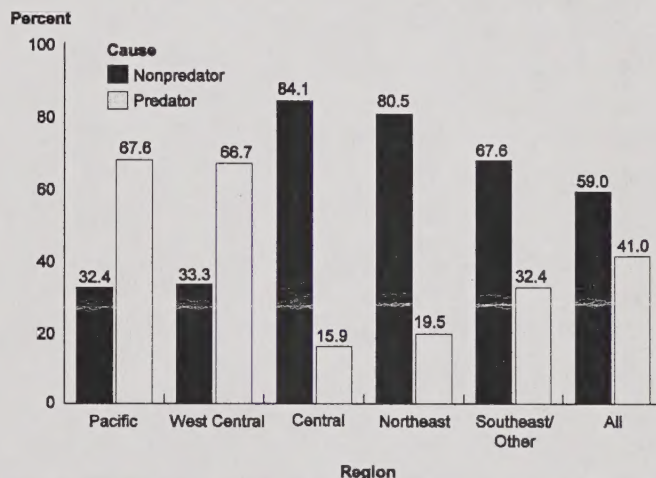
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Sheep and lamb regional* predator and nonpredator death loss—1994, 1999, and 2004

In the Pacific and West Central regions, the percentage of loss due to predators was higher for lambs (67.6 and 66.7 percent, respectively) than for sheep (29.6 and 39.2 percent, respectively). The percentages of predator and nonpredator sheep losses in these regions (approximately one-third predator and two-thirds nonpredator) are nearly reversed for lamb losses (approximately two-thirds predator and one-third nonpredator). The highest percentage of lamb loss due to nonpredator causes occurred in the Central and Northeast regions (84.1 and 80.5 percent, respectively) (figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of 2004 Lamb Death Loss by Cause and by Region



***Regions:**

Pacific: California, Oregon, and Washington

West Central: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming

Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island**, Virginia, Vermont, and West Virginia

Southeast/Other: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

**For the 1994 estimates, Rhode Island was included in the Southeast/Other region. In 1999 and 2004, Rhode Island was included in the Northeast region.



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Sheep nonpredator death loss by cause of loss—1994, 1999, and 2004

Nonpredator sheep losses totaled 148,900 head in 2004. "Other" nonpredator causes of loss (e.g., old age, lameness, and being on back) accounted for more sheep losses than any other category in 1994 and 1999 (34.7 and 34.0 percent of losses, respectively). In 2004, old age and being on back were removed from the "other" category. In 2004, old age accounted for more sheep losses than any other cause (26.8 percent of losses). Theft and weather-related causes were lower in 2004 than in 1994. The percentage of loss due to unknown causes appears to be decreasing, which is good news for producers and veterinarians alike (table 2).

Table 2. Percentage of sheep death loss by cause and by year:

Nonpredator Cause	Percent Nonpredator Loss		
	1994	1999	2004
Nonpredator Cause	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Digestive problems (bloat, scours, parasites, enterotoxemia, acidosis, etc.)	9.3	11.6	12.9
Respiratory problems (pneumonia, shipping fever, etc.)	6.9	8.5	9.4
Metabolic problems (milk fever, twin lamb disease, pregnancy toxemia, etc.)	3.6	3.2	3.7
Weather-related causes (chilling, drowning, lightning, etc.)	8.4	6.7	3.9
Theft (stolen)	2.0	0.8	0.5
Poisoning (nitrate poisoning, noxious feeds, noxious weeds, etc.)	5.3	4.0	3.9
Lambing problems	9.9	11.3	13.4
Old age	N/A	N/A	26.8
Being on back	N/A	N/A	2.0
Other diseases (mastitis, footrot, boils, etc.)	N/A	5.6	6.6
Other*	34.7	34.0	4.8
Unknown	19.9	14.3	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Lameness, etc. (Includes old age and being on back in 1994 and 1999).

Lamb nonpredator death loss by cause of loss—1994, 1999, and 2004

Nonpredator lamb losses totaled 227,200 head in 2004. From 1994 to 2004, the causes of lamb crop losses remained fairly consistent. Digestive and respiratory losses represented the highest percentages of loss in 1994, 1999, and 2004 (table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of lamb death loss by cause and by year:

Nonpredator Cause	Percent Nonpredator Loss		
	1994	1999	2004
Nonpredator Cause	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Digestive problems (bloat, scours, parasites, enterotoxemia, acidosis, etc.)	19.3	17.4	19.8
Respiratory problems (pneumonia, shipping fever, etc.)	19.4	21.9	22.8
Metabolic problems (milk fever, twin lamb disease, pregnancy toxemia, etc.)	3.9	3.2	2.8
Weather-related causes (chilling, drowning, lightning, etc.)	16.9	12.8	14.8
Theft (stolen)	1.8	0.9	0.7
Poisoning (nitrate poisoning, noxious feeds, noxious weeds, etc.)	2.5	1.8	2.0
Lambing problems	10.5	10.4	14.7
Other diseases (mastitis, footrot, boils, etc.)	N/A	3.8	3.3
Other**	8.2	13.1	5.8
Unknown	17.5	14.7	13.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Does not include Pacific and West Central regions.

**Being on back, lameness, etc.

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